Province of British Columbia

STRATEGIC PLAN

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Letter from the Premier

British Columbians have worked hard to rebuild our economic prosperity and create a better province for everyone. We are now at a key juncture, ready to take the benefits of this hard work and mobilize our strengths to ensure B.C. is a leader in health care, in education, in supporting people in need, in environmental sustainability, and in creating jobs that result from economic prosperity and opportunity. Our challenge is to do this while maintaining a sound fiscal plan that continues to support a strong and vibrant economy.

This strategic plan is designed to help government and its partners focus work on our common goals over the coming years. Government will continually evaluate our progress, making sure that we are headed in the right direction and along the right roads to a golden decade. This includes finding new ways to partner with other levels of government, communities, and the official opposition to further the progress made to achieve our vision to:

- Make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.
- Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness.
- Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors.
- Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.
- Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.

A cornerstone to our future success is the leadership, purpose and resolve of British Columbians. With their continued dedication and innovation, we can show the world what is possible when we work together to make the best place on Earth even better.

Gordon Campbell,
Premier

Introduction

Purpose of the Strategic Plan

This strategic plan sets out an overarching vision, goals and priority actions for the Province of B.C. It tells the public and the public service what the government aims to accomplish in partnership with its citizens and stakeholders, and sets out performance measures and targets for assessing progress for the next 10 years.

This strategic plan guides the work of ministries and Crown agencies. Their service plans and annual service plan reports provide greater detail on how the government's goals and strategic direction are being implemented.

Like ministry and Crown agency service plans, this strategic plan is updated annually and results are reported publicly, as part of the government's continuing commitment to accountability, openness and integrity.

Our vision for B.C. is:

To be a prosperous and just province, whose citizens achieve their potential and have confidence in the future.

Strategic Context

Vision and Core Values

Our **vision** for B.C. is:

To be a prosperous and just province, whose citizens achieve their potential and have confidence in the future.

Government's **core values** are:

Integrity: to make decisions in a manner that is consistent, professional, fair, transparent and balanced;

Fiscal Responsibility: to implement affordable public policies;

Accountability: to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and the credibility of government;

Respect: to treat all citizens equitably, compassionately and respectfully; and

Choice: to afford citizens the opportunity to exercise self-determination.

Five Great Goals

For 2006/07 to 2015/16, government will focus its energy on achieving the Five Great Goals. The goals are to:

1. *Make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.*

2. *Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness.*

3. *Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors.*

4. *Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.*

5. *Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.*

The Five Great Goals

Between 2001 and 2005, B.C. made tremendous progress in many areas. The government got its fiscal house in order, balanced the budget and began achieving surpluses. The province emerged as an economic leader in Canada with the second strongest growth and the best job creation. People began moving back to B.C. from other areas of Canada. Consumer and business confidence improved to the highest levels in Canada and, from its stronger economic and fiscal position, the government made new strategic investments in priority areas such as health care, education, the environment, services to seniors and a new relationship with First Nations.

In February 2005, to sharpen our focus on key priorities, government set out five Great Goals for B.C.'s golden decade. These goals are relevant to all British Columbians, and everyone – government, communities, businesses, organizations and individuals – has a role to play in achieving them by 2015/16.

The priority actions described in this plan will be reviewed on a regular basis and modified as economic and social conditions evolve in the years ahead. The performance measures and targets listed for each goal will help gauge success and guide long-term strategic planning. These performance measures are complemented by the performance measures in ministry and Crown agency service plans.

The Five Great Goals build on government's ongoing commitment to be fiscally responsible and to ensure that key foundations are in place, such as ensuring that all British Columbians have access to a fair and efficient system of justice and feel safe in their communities. Ultimately, the Five Great Goals are about building an even better future for our province. They are ambitious. They will require team work. But – as this strategic plan will illustrate in the years to come – they are goals that B.C. can and will achieve.

New Relationship and Aboriginal Well Being

The government is working with Aboriginal British Columbians to achieve the Five Great Goals and to ensure that improvements in health, education, support services, environmental management and job creation are realized in Aboriginal communities province-wide.

Government is working to support the implementation of a New Relationship with First Nations, founded on reconciliation, recognition and respect for Aboriginal rights and title, as well as working to finalize treaties and lasting agreements for land, resources and governance. The New Relationship also focuses on closing the socio-economic gap between Aboriginal people (First Nations, urban Aboriginal people and Métis) and non-Aboriginal people.

The communiqué from the First Ministers' Meeting on Aboriginal Issues entitled, Strengthening Relationships and Closing the Gap, and the Transformative Change Accord, which was signed by B.C., the Government of Canada and the Leadership Council representing B.C.'s First Nations, are significant elements of our plan to focus on closing the socio-economic gap over the next 10 years. B.C. will work with the federal government on a tripartite implementation plan that includes a process to monitor and report on actions, outcomes and performance measures.

"We agree to work together in this new relationship to achieve strong governments, social justice and economic self-sufficiency for First Nations which will be of benefit to all British Columbians and will lead to long-term economic viability."

– The New Relationship document, April 2005

B.C.'s adult literacy average scores are significantly higher than the national average.[1]

Out of 41 countries and 10 provinces, B.C. students were ranked third highest in reading, fifth highest in mathematics, and sixth highest in science and problem solving literacy.[2]

GOAL 1:

Make B.C. the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent

Education and literacy are vital to the progress of both individuals and the province as a whole. They lay the foundations for success in school, at work and throughout our lives – and foster innovations that directly benefit our economy, society and individuals' quality of life.

In today's world, knowledge is the key to opportunity. It gives people confidence, improves their self-reliance and allows them to discover and achieve their full potential while improving overall economic and social wellbeing for British Columbians. That is why the government has made education and literacy a top priority.

To support B.C. to be the best-educated and most literate jurisdiction on the continent, government will learn from leaders in these areas. For instance, B.C. has demonstrated considerable success in international literacy rates, ranking third in a 2003 assessment, behind Alberta and Finland.[1] By examining literacy policies and programs from leaders like these and collaborating with its partners, government may find new ways to build an educational infrastructure that allows B.C. to reach this goal.

Key partners include school boards, schools, post-secondary institutions, early childhood educators, the child-care sector, the private post-secondary education sector, industry, educators, parents, families, federal government departments (such as the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development, and Citizenship and Immigration Canada) and above all, lifelong learners.

[1] Measuring up: Canadian Results of the OECD PISA Study.

Initiatives Underway

Education is a top priority for government. Initiatives that are already underway to support this goal include:

- Increasing access to post-secondary education by adding over 4,300 new post-secondary spaces by the fall of 2006 on the way to creating 25,000 new spaces by 2010;
- Ensuring B.C. families have access to a sustainable, flexible and affordable early learning and child care system through initiatives such as Ready, Set, Learn and universal hearing, vision and dental screening;
- Developing a comprehensive framework to make sure there are literacy services in every B.C. community, and committing more than $40 million for initiatives such as LiteracyNow – a community-based planning process designed to address local literacy needs;
- Providing broadband Internet access and a 24-hour virtual reference desk to all public libraries across B.C.;
- Making learning affordable by providing funding for student financial assistance, including loan reductions for students in need, debt relief, a loan forgiveness program and grants for students with disabilities;
- Establishing a permanent Learning Roundtable with education stakeholders to discuss class size, class composition and other issues related to learning conditions in the public school system;
- Increasing the number of Aboriginal enhancement agreements between school boards and Aboriginal communities to improve Aboriginal student outcomes; and
- Expanding industry training and apprenticeship opportunities.

Priority Actions

Government will focus on priority actions such as:

- Developing a comprehensive Early Years Strategy to help ensure that children enter school "ready to learn";
- Ensuring British Columbians (students and adults) have high levels of literacy and are attaining the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to compete in today's global economy and society; and
- Closing the gap in literacy and educational attainment between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal British Columbians.

Performance Measures

To measure progress towards this goal, government is focusing on key performance measures relating to literacy and educational attainment. Trends that may affect B.C.'s ability to achieve this goal include changing economic conditions, an aging population, shifting demographic trends, inflow of immigrants, and level of support from the federal government.

School Readiness indicates children's readiness to learn, including their behaviour and coping skills, as they enter kindergarten. B.C. is a leader in the development and use of this early development indicator. Addressing issues that result in children being "at risk" or "vulnerable" in terms of school readiness can help ensure that B.C. children are able to grow, learn and take advantage of educational opportunities. Provincial baseline data from 2004/05 show that 75% of kindergarten students are "ready to learn". The target is to increase that proportion to 85% by 2015/16.

Student Literacy in reading, mathematics, science and problem solving is measured by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) - an international assessment of 15 year old students. The latest PISA results (2003) show that 75% of B.C. students have the reading abilities they need to thrive in a knowledge-based society, while 74% have the mathematics skills. B.C. students also score highly in science and problem solving. Of 41 jurisdictions, including the United States and 10 provinces, B.C. is currently ranked third overall in reading, fifth in mathematics and sixth in science and problem solving. Among the provinces, B.C. is ranked second behind Alberta. The 2015/16 target is to be the top performing PISA jurisdiction in Canada and to improve B.C.'s world ranking.

High school graduation is a basic measure of educational attainment. Young adults have a far better chance of making a successful transition to work or further education if they have completed high school. In 2004/05 the high school graduation rate was 79% in B.C. By 2015/16 the target is to increase the rate to 85%.

While high school graduation is an important measure, today's knowledge-based economy often demands more – a **successfully completed apprenticeship, college program or university degree**. In 2004, 55.8% of British Columbians aged 25 - 64 had a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree. The Canadian average is 56.9% and the United States average 39.1%. The 2015/16 target for B.C. is to meet or exceed the Canadian average.

British Columbia has top performing provincial health system overall.[4]

Each additional kilometre walked per day reduces the likelihood of becoming obese by nearly 5%, while each hour per day spent in a car increases the likelihood of becoming obese by 6%.[5]

GOAL 2:

Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness

Nothing is more important than our health, and our families' health. Good health enables us to enjoy life to the fullest and participate actively in society and the economy.

Health is a very personal issue, affected by individual choices such as what we eat and how much we exercise. It is also a public policy issue because population health directly affects our wellbeing as a province and influences the strength and sustainability of our health care system. The government has made it a priority because we want all British Columbians to enjoy healthy, active lives – and the benefits they offer in terms of personal and community wellness.

B.C. is traditionally a strong performer in key health outcomes with, for example, the longest life expectancy in North America and the second longest among OECD countries, after Japan.[6] Life expectancy is considered a key indicator of overall population health, and the government is working to build on that foundation by promoting healthy lifestyles and providing health care services and supports.

To ensure that B.C. leads the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness, government will work with its partners, including health authorities and health care providers, the non-profit community, school districts, schools, community organizations, municipalities, the sport and recreation system, and federal government agencies (such as Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada) and all British Columbians.

[6] Human Development Report 2005, an independent report commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme.

Initiatives Underway

Health care is one of the most important issues for British Columbians and a top priority for government, which has focused on improving the population's quality of life, increasing the years of healthy life, and eliminating health disparities. Recent government actions to sustain healthy people in healthy communities include:

- Launching a comprehensive social campaign to raise awareness and motivate the population to make healthy lifestyle choices through ActNow BC;
- Bringing educators, parents, students, health professionals and municipal leaders together to contribute ideas to a provincial framework for healthy schools;
- Doubling the number of doctors in training and adding over 2,500 new nurse training spaces;
- Providing opportunities for people to become more active in their communities by, for example, supporting recreational trail development and expanding cycling infrastructure partnerships;
- Motivating kids to be more active in schools by expanding Action Schools! BC to all school districts; and
- Increasing awareness of healthy eating by expanding the School Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program, developing Healthy Eating guides for seniors and families, and launching the Healthy Aboriginal Food Literacy project.

Priority Actions

Each British Columbian will play a vital role in achieving this Great Goal. The government will work with its partners to encourage healthy lifestyle choices. It will also focus on:

- Making B.C. the healthiest jurisdiction to ever host a modern Olympic and Paralympic Games;
- Encouraging British Columbians to reduce tobacco use, increase physical activity and nutrition, and make healthier choices during pregnancy (set out by the specific targets of ActNow BC);
- Expanding the School Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program;
- Encouraging British Columbians to make healthier living choices that support a sustainable health care system by reducing the burden of chronic disease; and
- Closing the gap in health status between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal British Columbians.

Performance Measures

Long, healthy lives for British Columbians are the essence of the second Great Goal. Some of the trends which may affect the achievement of this goal include an aging population, increasing demand for complex and expensive health care services, levels of tobacco use, and changing patterns in the provision and distribution of health information and services.

Life Expectancy at Birth is an overall indicator of the health of British Columbians. The healthier the population, the longer the average lifespan. As of 2004, a baby born in B.C. can expect to live nearly 81 years. This is the highest life expectancy in Canada and greater than the life expectancy in the United States. The 2015/16 target is to maintain B.C.'s Number 1 ranking in Canada and to increase British Columbians' life expectancy at birth to more than 81 years.

Physical activity of British Columbians aged 12 and over. Physical activity is measured by the Canadian Community Health Survey, which indicates that 58.1% of British Columbians are active or moderately active in their leisure time (self-reported for more than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per day)[7]. While this 2003 result is the best result in Canada – the overall Canadian result is 50.4% – there is substantial room for improvement. By 2015/16 the target is to increase the proportion of physically active British Columbians from 58.1% to 73%.

[7] The Canadian Community Health Survey is conducted every two years by Statistics Canada to provide regular and timely cross-sectional estimates of health determinants, health status and health system utilization for 136 health regions across the country.

ActNowBC
30 minutes and
5 fruits/vegetables
per day to keep
British Columbians
healthy!
ActNow

Being **overweight or obese** contributes to many preventable illnesses and causes of death such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke, gallbladder disease, arthritis, sleep disturbances, breathing problems, and certain types of cancers. In 2003, B.C. had the lowest percentage of overweight or obese adults in Canada. However, 42.3% of B.C. adults were still considered overweight. The target for 2015/16 is to decrease that proportion from 42.3% to 32%.

Tobacco use is another major contributor to preventable illness. At 15% in 2004, B.C. has the lowest smoking rate in Canada for people aged 15 or older. The overall Canadian result is 20%. The target over time for the province is to continue to demonstrate a decrease in the smoking rate. For 2015/16 the target is a 13% smoking rate.

ActNow BC

ActNow BC is the most comprehensive health promotion program of its kind in North America. It assists British Columbians to make positive lifestyle choices, be active, and enjoy the good health they need to fully participate in society. Through *ActNow BC*, government promotes physical activity, healthy eating, living tobacco free and making healthy choices during pregnancy. By encouraging each citizen to make healthy choices in each of the *ActNow BC* areas, the program has potential to deliver significant improvements in health outcomes, health system access and overall quality of life.

There are nearly 300,000 working age persons with disabilities in BC. Only 44% of these people were actually employed in 2001.[8]

GOAL 3:

Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors

Everyone deserves the opportunity to live a full, rewarding life, to pursue their goals and dreams, and to participate and thrive in all aspects of society. Government has an important role to play in supporting such opportunities for the most vulnerable members of society, including people with disabilities, those with special needs, children and youth at risk, and seniors.

A strong and vibrant economy provides the foundation for strengthening support systems, which can range from housing and health care to employment assistance to educational services and assistive devices. Government has made this a priority because it is essential to our vision of B.C.

No single factor can achieve this goal but, as it continues to provide key supports, the government is looking to other jurisdictions to see where there may be room for improvement. For example, citizen-centred service delivery can better coordinate, and thereby maximize the value of, supports for people with disabilities, seniors, and those at risk. And Alberta's partnership with the federal government to integrate employment service delivery serves is a leading example of the kind of innovation from which we can learn.

Key partners in building the best system of support include health authorities and health care providers, schools, non-profit organizations, community organizations, First Nations, provincial and territorial governments, and federal government agencies.

Initiatives Underway

To create the best system of support, government will build on a number of significant programs and initiatives that are already underway, including:

Providing extended medical coverage including dental, optical, medical equipment and supplies to low income individuals and families including seniors and those with disabilities;

Expanding employment programs for persons with disabilities and increasing the earnings exemption for people receiving disability assistance;

Addressing the challenges of homelessness, mental illness, and addictions in B.C. communities through the recommendations of the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions;

Supporting children with special needs by providing funding to increase access to Early Intervention Therapies, School-Aged Therapies, Infant Development Programs and Supported Child Development services, as well as augmenting services to children with complex health needs and children with sensory impairments;

Increasing funding support for students with special needs to give families more choices and students more opportunities to achieve their best;

Promoting family and community capacity to protect children and supporting children to remain safely within their families and communities, through such things as early outreach for vulnerable families, family support services, and alternatives to care arrangements;

Supporting children at risk through CommunityLink, which provides funding to school boards for programs that support at-risk children and youth, and other community based programs and services for at risk-children and youth;

Assisting seniors to live independently through initiatives such as doubling the annual investment in the SAFER program - a rental subsidy initiative for low income seniors;

Subsidizing bus passes for low income persons with disabilities and seniors; and

Increasing partnerships with First Nations and other Aboriginal people to address socio-economic disparities.

Priority Actions

Ensuring that appropriate actions are in place to achieve this goal is a challenge. Government will:

Develop a Provincial Disability Strategy to provide for a comprehensive and integrated system of supports and services for persons with disabilities;

Introduce a comprehensive Provincial Housing Strategy to improve the safety, stability and range of housing choices for British Columbians, particularly those with special housing needs;

Provide integrated services and supports for children and youth with special needs so they can actively participate at home, at school and in their communities and develop to their full potential; and

Continue to improve the range of care options for seniors' including creating an additional 5,000 long-term care beds.

Performance Measures

To measure progress towards this goal, government is focusing on key indicators for persons with disabilities or special needs, children and youth at risk, and seniors. Trends that may affect government's ability to achieve this goal include an aging population, expanding health care services, advancements in health and other technology, pharmaceutical advancements, increasing drug costs, rising housing costs, and growing homelessness numbers.

Having a disability does not always prevent people from working. The **employment rate for working age British Columbians with disabilities** was 44% in 2001, the fourth highest rate in Canada and substantially above the Canadian average of 41.5%. The target for 2015/16 is to increase the employment rate significantly to 56%.

Percentage of school age disadvantaged children in a grade that is normal for their age. How well socio-economically disadvantaged children are keeping up in school is a good measure of whether the system of support around them is generating good outcomes. By adopting this measure, B.C. is taking a leadership role in Canada and underlining its commitment to eliminate the gap between socio-economically disadvantaged and other children. In 2005, 86% of disadvantaged B.C. children were in their age appropriate grade. For 2015/16 the target is 95%.

DOLOMITE

For many seniors independent living is a major determinant of quality of life. According to the 2001 Canadian census, 10.3% of **British Columbians 75 or older were living in health care or related institutions** such as nursing homes or senior citizens' homes. This rate was the second lowest in Canada. With an aging population and a climate and location attractive to retirees, the percentage of British Columbians 75 or older is expected to increase faster than in many other provinces; therefore, the percentage of seniors' in seniors' facilities will likely increase over time. Given the anticipated growth in this age group, maintaining B.C.'s second place ranking in Canada is the target for 2015/16.

Citizen-Centred Service Delivery

British Columbians shouldn't have to be experts in government organization to access the programs and supports they need. To make public services more accessible, easier to deal with and more responsive to those who need them, the government is coordinating work across ministries and agencies to adopt a citizen-centred approach to service delivery. That means providing more single-window access to programs and services. It also means British Columbians get the information they need, in an easy to understand way, no matter how they access those services.

Citizen-centred service delivery is one of several key cross-government initiatives supporting the achievement of the Five Great Goals for the people of British Columbia.

Western Canada is a natural paradise: mind-blowingly, breath-robbingly beautiful.[9]

Overall, BC ranked first in Canada on environmental quality, buoyed by a strong showing on the air quality, greenhouse gas emissions and protected areas performance indicators.[10]

GOAL 4:

Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none

B.C. is known around the world as a place of spectacular natural beauty. From the deserts of the Interior, to coastal rain forests, to alpine meadows and tundra in the North, we have an incredible range of ecosystems. And we're taking steps to protect and preserve them, so British Columbians and visitors alike can continue to enjoy the many benefits of a healthy environment, with clean air and water and strong, sustainable fisheries resources. We've made this a priority because it is so essential to our society, our economic prosperity and our exceptional quality of life – today and for generations to come.

B.C. is a leader in environmental protection, stewardship and sustainable resource management. To build on this foundation and lead the world in sustainable environmental management, government will learn from leaders in this area. For instance, the 2006 Environmental Performance Index, which rates 133 countries on 16 environmental indicators, ranks New Zealand first in the world in environmental performance.[1] B.C. can learn from leaders like New Zealand to further improve sustainable environmental management strategies and incentives.

Key partners to help government achieve this Great Goal include community organizations, the non-profit community, First Nations, schools, post-secondary institutions, industry, professional organizations, and federal government agencies.

[1] Pilot 2006 Environmental Performance Index, developed by the Center for Environmental Law & Policy at Yale University and the Center for International Earth Science Information Network at Columbia University in collaboration with the World Economic Forum and the Joint Research

Initiatives Underway

The provincial government will build on its demonstrated success in managing and protecting B.C.'s natural environment, including:

- Building new coalitions with key stakeholder groups – NGOs, local communities, industry, and First Nations – to generate new and technically sound solutions to conservation issues;
- Completing historic Land Use Plans for the Central Coast and North Coast regions that preserve coastal lands and protect their ecological integrity in a manner that respects indigenous cultures and strengthens local economies;
- Encouraging the largest ever private sector investment in green, renewable energy in B.C by working with BC Hydro to process bids for Independent Power Projects;
- Establishing 37 new parks, expanding 34 others, and protecting more than 150,000 hectares of B.C. wilderness;
- Passing species at risk protection legislation for the first time in B.C.;
- Establishing the Pacific Salmon Forum and a $7 million Living Rivers Trust Fund;
- Committing to action to mitigate the mountain pine beetle outbreak as outlined in B.C.'s Pine Beetle Action Plan 2005-2010. Consistent with this action plan, the province has committed $89 million from 2005/06 to 2007/08 to address the outbreak, while the federal government's contribution over this same time period will total $100 million; and
- Introducing a comprehensive $16 million Drinking Water Action Plan and Groundwater Protection Plan to improve and protect our water quality.

Priority Actions

To demonstrate leadership in sustainable environmental management for our ecosystems, communities and economic wellbeing, the government will focus on a number of priority actions, including ensuring that B.C.:

- Has a plan in place and actions underway to ensure superior air quality;
- Has a water strategy to ensure superior water quality and sustainable water development;
- Undertakes exemplary fisheries management; and
- Undertakes economic activity in ways that ensure sustainable environmental management.

Performance Measures

To measure progress towards this goal, the government is focusing on key indicators of air and water quality. Trends that will influence success in achieving this goal include the economic outlook for the province and nation, the value of the Canadian dollar, global market forces, advancing technology, rapid population growth, demographic shifts, changing consumer choices, the Kyoto Protocol, and support from other levels of government.

Annual average fine particulate (pm 2.5) concentrations in major metropolitan areas. When comparisons are made between major metropolitan areas of similar size and population, Vancouver is ranked second in Canada with respect to its air quality (it has less fine particulate matter in its air than most comparable cities). The 2015/16 target for this measure is to achieve a first place rank.

Per capita greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Greenhouse gases or GHGs are gases that trap energy from the sun. While greenhouse gases can occur naturally, they are also created by human activity, which contributes significantly to global warming. In 2003 B.C. had the third lowest per capita greenhouse gas emissions in Canada (behind PEI and Quebec). While it is important to improve our standing within Canada, it's also important to look beyond Canada for comparison purposes and examine how others, for example, Washington and Oregon, are doing. B.C. currently has more greenhouse gas emissions per capita than Oregon, but less than Washington. The 2015/16 target is to improve B.C.'s ranking.

Water quality trends. In order to move towards the best possible water quality, B.C. will measure trends in 30 water bodies monitored under the Canada-BC Water Quality Monitoring Agreement. In 2004/05 96% of the monitoring stations in the 30 water bodies had stable or improving water quality trends. The 2015/16 target is to improve on this ranking.

BC remains on a solid growth track with virtually all major sectors contributing to the expansion.[12]

GOAL 5:

Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada

In 2005, B.C.'s unemployment rate fell to 5.9 per cent – its lowest level in more than 30 years and well below the national rate of 6.8 per cent. Between December 2001 and December 2005, the province's economy created more than 273,000 jobs – the most per capita of any province – and 92 per cent were full-time positions.

More jobs mean more opportunities for individuals, families and communities to enhance their quality of life. Job creation also supports continuing economic growth and prosperity, and provides resources for programs such as health care, education and support for those in need. That is why the government has made it a priority to build on B.C.'s record of job creation.

Since 2001, B.C. has taken a number of important steps in this direction, including reducing the regulatory burden on British Columbians by over one third. This provides businesses and consumers with one of the most effective, efficient and safe regulatory systems in Canada. B.C. is leading the way in this area and will continue to lead by encouraging other jurisdictions to adopt B.C.'s regulatory reform model, and by continuing to ensure that B.C. has a streamlined and simplified regulatory system that protects health and safety while addressing regulations that hinder growth and productivity. Other key measures to support job creation will also be maintained and enhanced.

To achieve this Great Goal, government will collaborate with its key partners including the business community, the research community, investors, industry, First Nations, labour unions, local governments, and federal government agencies.

Initiatives Underway

The provincial government will build on its demonstrated success in supporting and encouraging job creation with actions such as:

- Continuing to promote a reduced regulatory burden and ensuring a tax climate that supports a vibrant economy, with initiatives such as the recent reduction in the general corporate income tax rate from 13.5% to 12.0%;
- Supporting B.C.'s cultural diversity to build new opportunities in trade, tourism, education and health care through programs such as B.C. Skills Connect for Immigrants, which helps new British Columbians overcome language barriers and find work in their fields of expertise;
- Implementing an Asia-Pacific strategy to capitalize on expanding Asian markets;
- Getting expert advice through initiatives such as the B.C. Competition Council, which conducts a comprehensive review of B.C.'s competitiveness in every sector, pinpoints the barriers to growth, and identifies solutions to overcome them;
- Developing a Gateway Program to help create a comprehensive, effective transportation network that supports improved movement of people and goods – facilitating economic growth, increased transportation choices, and better connections to designated population growth areas;
- Providing opportunities for communities to develop legacies from B.C. hosting the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games; and
- Improving and increasing the sustainable development of natural resources by implementing the new Mining Plan; updating the provincial Energy Plan; building on the Mountain Pine Beetle Strategy; expanding oil and gas exploration; and promoting alternative energy sources.

Priority Actions

Government will build on its successes to improve B.C.'s jobs-per-capita performance relative to the rest of Canada. Other priority areas related to this goal include:

- Ensuring that B.C. is capitalizing on economic development opportunities and creating wealth and revenue required to support social programs;
- Making B.C. one of the most business friendly jurisdictions in Canada to attract and retain investment;
- Ensuring that impediments to economic development (e.g. transportation limitations, labour shortages) are addressed;
- Ensuring that First Nations can take advantage of economic development opportunities;
- Enhancing economic and labour market strategies to ensure that B.C. is advancing sectors with the greatest opportunity for success and addressing the skills shortage;
- Implementing an Asia-Pacific strategy to capitalize on expanding Asian markets;
- Developing and implementing a new, contemporary energy policy that supports sustained, long-term energy investment;
- Introducing the B.C. Research and Innovation Strategy to foster a coordinated and integrated approach to research, innovation and the dissemination of ideas and increase the number of highly-qualified personnel within the province;
- Growing a world-class technology base; and
- Maximizing the potential of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, which will not only showcase the province on a global scale, but provide a catalyst for businesses to create new jobs and take advantage of new opportunities.

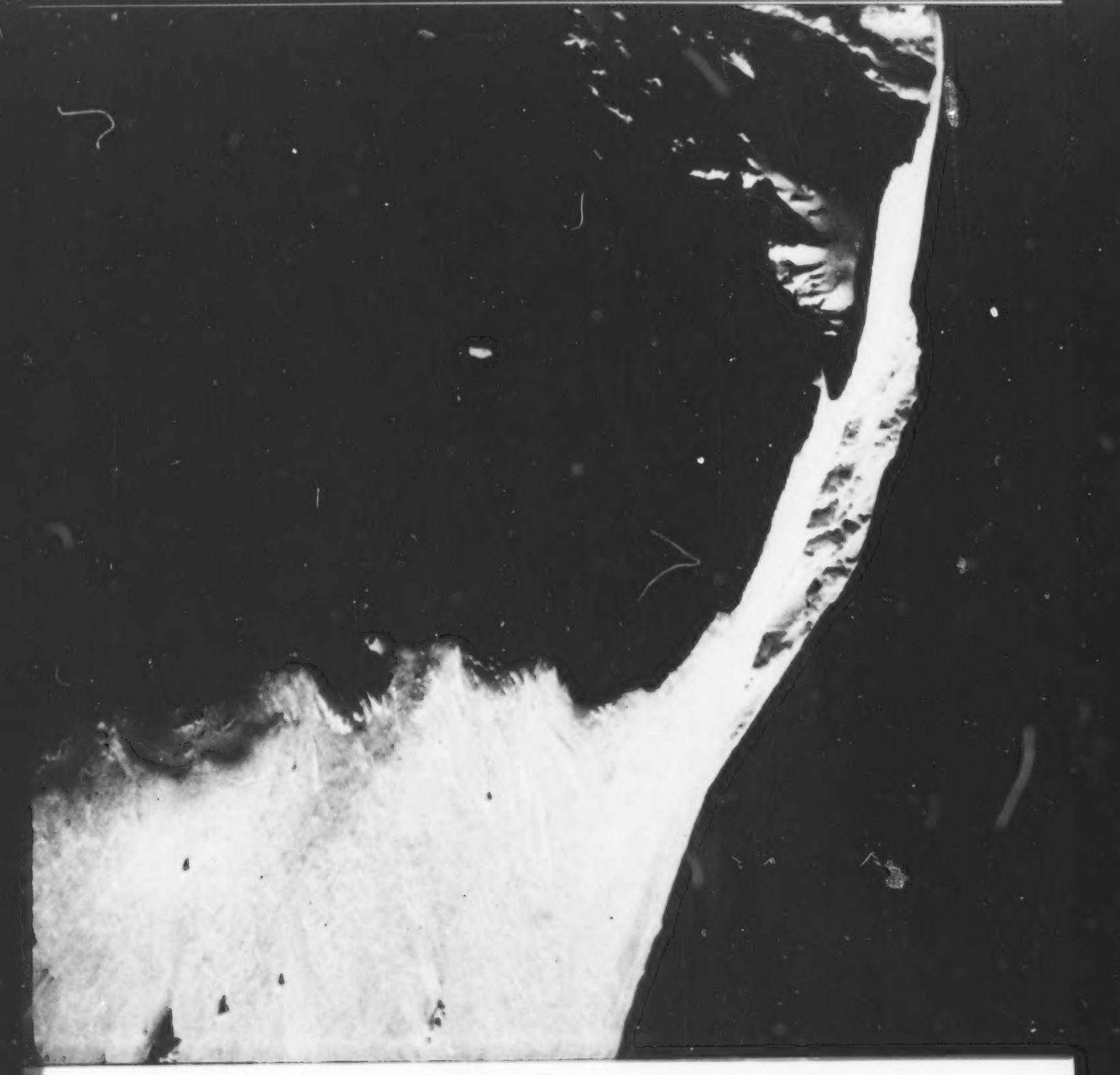
Performance Measures

To measure progress towards this goal, government will continue to monitor the number of new jobs created. Trends that may affect government's ability to achieve this goal include the economic outlook for the province, the nation and B.C.'s major trading partners; the value of the Canadian dollar; commodity prices; population and demographic shifts; skills shortages; and the ability to attract skilled immigrants.

Number of new jobs created per 1,000 population compared to other provinces reflects the province's ability to create jobs. In 2004 B.C. ranked third, behind Alberta and Nova Scotia. In 2005, B.C. was ranked Number 1, having achieved extraordinary job creation throughout the year. The 2015/16 target is to achieve a first place ranking.

Expanding the Asia Pacific Gateway

Asia-Pacific countries, and in particular China, lead the world in economic growth. As the Asia-Pacific continues to modernize and grow, B.C. has incredible opportunities to strengthen trade, tourism and cultural relationships. Building on our already well-established status as Canada's Asia-Pacific Gateway, the government is working to expand Gateway infrastructure and build stronger relationships with Asia-Pacific nations through such initiatives as inter-modal transportation links, cultural exchange opportunities, educational partnerships and – with the federal government – immigration and international commerce links.



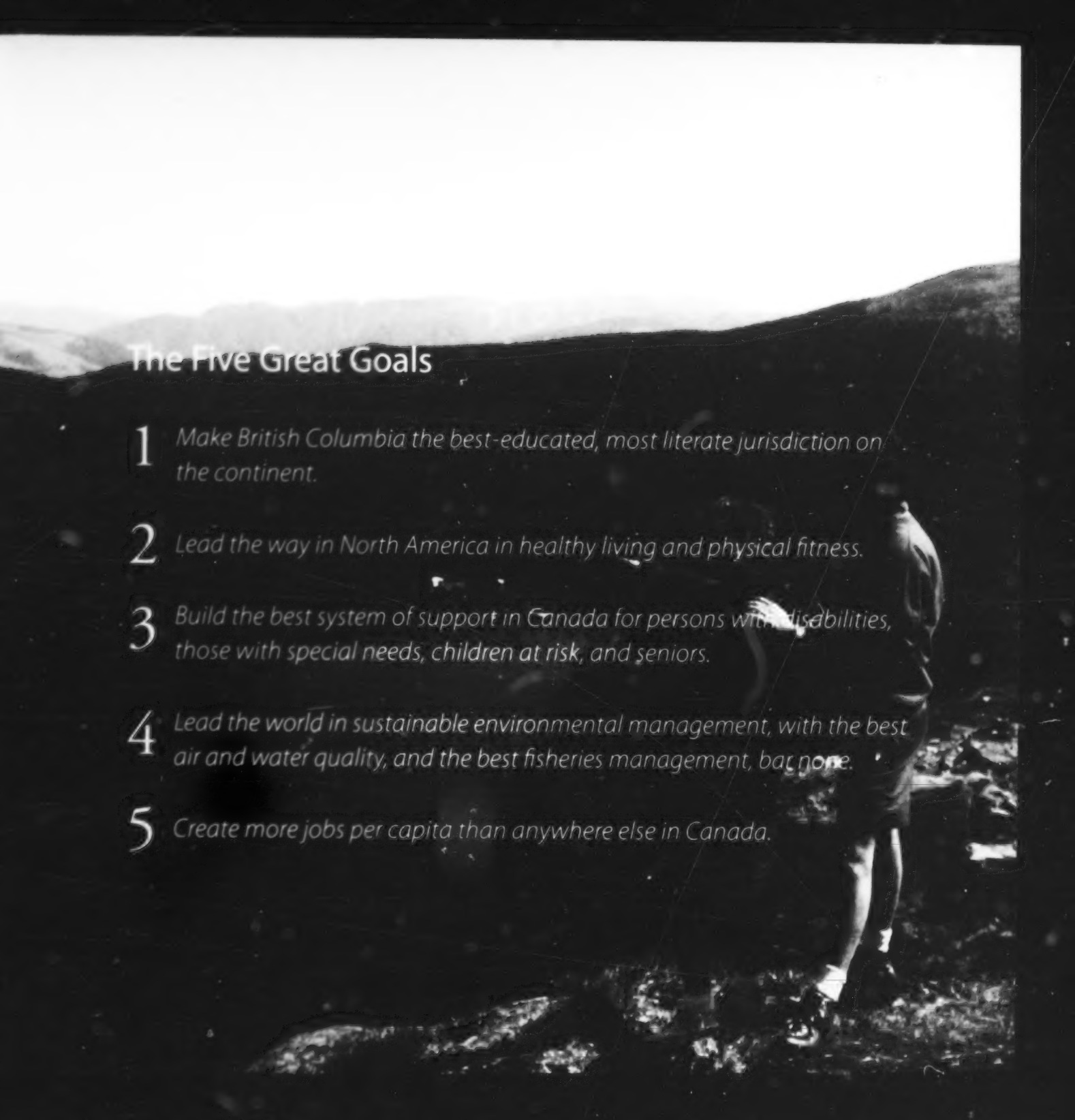
Conclusion

British Columbians are working hard to realize the vision of a prosperous and just province whose citizens achieve their potential and have confidence in the future. Over the last four years, our economy has grown, job creation has soared and, supported by stronger, more accountable fiscal management, the government has reinvested in a wide range of priority programs – including early learning and literacy initiatives; new support for he... hy schools; higher support levels for persons with disabilities; and new measures to ensure that British Columbians have jobs.

Now we're moving forward to build on our successes and – as with past achievements – government will work in partnership with British Columbians. The B.C. public service will continue to play an instrumental role in our work towards the Five Great Goals, and will continue to build on the leadership training, succession planning and other critical human resource initiatives needed to ensure a strong, diverse and expert public service.

The lead-up to the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games will give our province unparalleled opportunities for global exposure, and we are working to ensure that the benefits are shared by all British Columbians well beyond 2010. Our strategic position as the gateway to the rapidly expanding markets in the Asia-Pacific provides new opportunities we can capitalize on in the coming years. And our new relationship with First Nations continues to be a key priority, and will help to guide our work towards the Great Goals.

This strategic plan will be updated yearly and we look forward to reporting our progress. This is our plan for the future – a future where every British Columbian shares in the province's success and prosperity.



The Five Great Goals

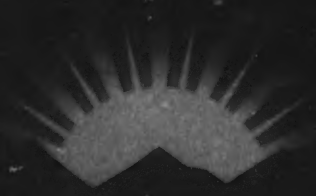
1. *Make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.*

2. *Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness.*

3. *Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors.*

4. *Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.*

5. *Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.*



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